

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 12, 14, 16-19, and 21 were examined, with the remaining claims having been withdrawn pursuant to restriction and election of species requirements. Claims 1-11 and 18-22 have been cancelled with other claims having been amended as noted above.

Reexamination and reconsideration of the claims, as amended, are respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, applicants confirm the restriction and have cancelled all non-elected claims. Applicants, however, believe that the withdrawal of species claims 13 and 15 should be withdrawn as it is believed that these claims depend from an allowable independent claim (claim 12) for the reasons discussed more fully below. The species withdrawal of claims 20 and 22 is moot because these claims have been cancelled.

Turning now to the substantive rejections, all of the examined claims have been rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,770,088 to Jang. Such rejections are traversed in part and overcome in part.

The examiner relies on Fig. 8E as describing a number of the claimed aspects of the present invention, including "a plurality of S-shaped connectors (26)." Applicants respectfully disagree with such reliance. A careful review of Fig. 8E, which is perspective view of the structure of Fig. 8D, reveals that the connectors 26 simply do not comprise an S-shape. The shape consists principally of an axial and lateral member joined at a single principal bend. More importantly, at least 1 of the connecting ends of the connector 26 extends axially from the adjacent wall section.

In order to even more clearly distinguish the teachings of Jang '088, applicants have amended both remaining independent claims (claims 12 and 17) to recite that both ends of the S-shaped connector "emerge laterally from the wall section." Such lateral emergence is illustrated, for example, in Figs. 2 and 11 where it can be seen that the ends of the connectors

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PATENT

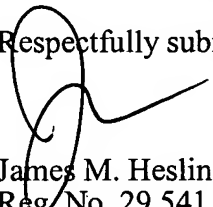
(which are coincidentally numbered 26 in the present application) do not extend axially from either of the cylindrical walls, but instead extend laterally to form a true S-shape.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicants believe that all remaining claims are in condition for allowance and request that the application be passed to issue at an early date.

CONCLUSION

If for any reason the examiner believes that a telephone conference would in any way expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,


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